

GOALPOSTS AND GRIDIRONS



THE BASICS



The Big Game

Goalposts & Gridirons is a Powered by the Apocalypse game about Football. If you've never played a PBTA game, that's ok! It's inspired by, and uses the mechanics of, a roleplaying game called Apocalypse World, written by Vincent & Meg Baker. We'll get into the mechanics here in a bit, but now all you need to know is that you and a friend are going to have a conversation and this conversation will turn into a story. Part of that story is going to be you and your friend talking about various situations, asking "what happens next?" Another part of the story is going to be based off of dice rolls that will provide prompts that you will expound on. You'll go back and forth taking turns until one of you wins. We'll get into winning later, I promise.

In Goalposts & Gridirons, you and a friend will play a game of Football. You will each be playing as one team competing with another team in the Big Game.

Who's On First

The first step of playing is to flip a coin. One person should call whether they want heads or tails. The result of the coin flip will determine who goes first.

If You Build It...

Once that's done, choose your teams and lay out the field. You should also choose a small marker or token to represent the ball's position on the field. You'll move this token up & down the field based on the results of the moves you'll be making in your conversation. We'll get into this a little later on, but the basics of it is that you want the token to end up in your opponent's end-zone in order to score points. Play lasts for an hour or an hour and a half depending on your preferences, after which you and your friend will tally your points and declare a winner.

OPTIONAL: Search "_____ Night Football Theme" on Youtube & play the music

during setup.

Be Excellent To Each Other

Goalposts & Gridirons is a game, and it's supposed to be fun. If for any reason at all you feel uncomfortable during play, it's ok to take a step away, ask for a break in the action, or halt play entirely. Play should be lighthearted but I can't predict everything, so I'm taking this space to say: your safety comes first. I'm hoping your friend will understand if you have to say "Hey this that's happening right now? Not super cool. Less of this please." about anything at all in the game. Be proactive about sensing if your friend is having a good time as well, or if they could use a change of tone if needed. If you're ever confused about a rule, feel free to house-rule a fix. If there's ever an unsolvable dispute between you, flip a coin. The result of the flip is definitive and should be respected.

Take Your Turn

During turns, players will rotate the roles of Offense & Defense. When you have Possession of the ball, your team is on Offense. It is your job to declare things about the story. You should be making statements about what is happening in The Big Game, or events surrounding your team's brand, or the lives of your fans. Look at your Team's Playbook or the list of Basic Moves for inspiration. Once you have an idea for what you want to happen, make a declaration about something happening. Then roll the dice.

Roll Them Bones

Goalposts & Gridirons uses the 2D6 +Stat system of Apocalypse World. If you're unfamiliar, this just means that you'll roll two six-sided die (2D6) and add your stat. On a 10+ you succeed at whatever story moment you're going for. There's usually an extra benefit in there, too. On a 7-9 you succeed but at a cost. You may have to make a choice about your results, or concede something to your opponent. On a 6- you fail, but there's usually some sort of consolation. Everyone loves an Underdog.

In addition to providing narrative direction, your die rolls will also influence your team's progress on the field. For every die roll you advance the token on the field that many yards. You start your turn at First Down. On a 10+ you advance that many yards and you reset to First Down (see more about Downs in a bit). On a 7-9 you advance but mark a down

(becoming Second Down, then Third Down). Once you hit Fourth Down you must immediately turn over possession. The downs increase until you get a 10+ and a First Down, or you get a 6-. On a 6- you turn over Possession and become Defense.

D-Fence! D-Fence!

Speaking of Defense, let's get back to our Offense/Defense talk. We've already mentioned how you should take an active role when playing Offense. Offense's job is to drive the story that's happening. If you're playing Defense, however, your job is to react to Offense.

If they make a declaration, ask probing questions, provide dramatic reactions, or pitch in narrating your team's reactions. You cannot directly challenge anything the Offense player says but you can twist their words a little bit to fit your strategy. Your strategy is to steer them in ways that would cause them to make as many rolls as possible, ideally rolls with their weaker stats (more on stats later). The more rolls the Offense player makes the more yards they gain, sure, but the more likely they'll rack up downs, or roll a 6- and transfer possession to you.

Down To The Wire

Once you hit third down, you have two options. You can either rush the play, or try for a kick. If you rush the play, you must either make a Brilliant Play or Scrimmage move (see Moves

THE NITTY GRITTY



RULES

later on). If you choose to kick, take a spare piece of paper and fold it into a triangular paper football. Your friend should hold their hands up like goalposts (no moving the goalposts, that's cheating) and you will have to flick your paper football between the goalposts. If you make it, you turn over possession but score 3 points.

Vital Statistics

I mentioned earlier that you'll be rolling $2D6 + \text{Stat}$. Every team shares the same four stats: Jock, Strats, Photogenic, and Ego.

Jock

is used for the Scrimmage and Roughing a Player Basic Moves. It reflects how beefy your beefcakes are. Jock is the brute force of your team.

Strats

is used for the Brilliant Play and Assess the Field Moves. If you have high Strats it means your team knows the ins and outs of Football and can use your genius and knowledge to your advantage.

Photogenic

is the charisma of your team. It's used for Gaining a Sponsor, or for Creating a Scandal. Photogenic reflects how well your team is at manipulating the limelight, and it represents your team's showmanship.

Ego

is your Team Spirit, your determination, your intrinsic self-worth. It's also your arrogance, obstinance, and self-doubt as well, so be careful. Ego is used for Exploring the Fans, and Community Outreach.

The Spread

Each Team starts with two skills at +1, and two at -1. After you assign your stats according to your team, you will get 1 point to put in any stat you wish. Perhaps you want to bolster one of your +1 stats and make it +2, or maybe you want to mitigate one of your poor stats, making a -1 a 0. It's up to you. As you go up in Rank you will also get points to place in stats of your choice. You can never have more than +3 in any stat.

REGULATIONS

Possession Is Nine Tenths Of The Law

If your team is on Offense, you are in Possession. You remain in Possession until one of three things happens:

- You roll a 6- on any move and turn over Possession.
- You hit 4 Downs by rolling 7-9 using any moves 3 times in a row. (You always start at 1st Down, every subsequent Advancement on the field increases the amount of Downs.)
- You turn over Possession immediately after making a Kick, regardless of if you score points or not.

Play To The Crowd

Any time that you turn over possession, you'll gain a point of Crowd Favor. The fans came for a show, and a one-sided contest isn't entertaining. In addition to turn-overs, you may also be able to mark Crowd favor through various Team-specific Moves.

Once you reach 5 Crowd Favor, your count resets and you go up one Rank according to your Playbook. Think of this as leveling up. You're effectively cashing in on your Crowd Favor for benefits that you can apply for the rest of the game.

The Roster

Unless stated otherwise, every team has 4 Named Athletes and 1 Named Fan.

Whenever you Create a Scandal, Gain a Sponsor, do Community Outreach, Rough a Player, or Explore the Fans you'll use these characters as narrative vehicles.

Only Athletes can Gain Sponsors, and only Fans can Explore Fans. Both types of characters can participate in Community Outreach or become the target of a Scandal.

It's a good idea to spread things out, really focus on the team. Certain effects and abilities can remove a Named Character from play so don't load up all on one.



Contact Sport

No one is indestructible. You may be wrapped in the finest padding and gear but a hit is a hit. Some hits aren't necessarily physical, and it's important to watch out for those, too. You have a way to gauge your team's standing by looking at your Stress Track on your team's Playbook.

This Stress Track has 5 unchecked boxes. Every time your opponent's Moves force you to mark Stress you fill in one of these boxes. Once all 5 become filled, you have a few options:

- Take a Named Character out of the game with an injury. (Losing all Sponsors, Community Outreach, and Scandals associated with that character)
- Go down a Rank, losing all Stat gains or Moves gained.
- Give your opponent a 30 yard Advancement.

Optional Rule:

If you run out of Named Characters through Stress, your team automatically forfeits.

What Condition My Condition Was In

During play you may become victim to a Condition. You might also do something that affects your opponent enough that they suffer a lasting consequence. Conditions are a way to reflect that. If you do a Move that applies a Condition to your opponent, think about what kind of affliction would be best suited for this occasion (in the case of Create a Scandal, this has already been done for you) and give that affliction a snappy-sounding name. Your target now takes on that Condition until it is resolved or taken away somehow.

You may also take on positive Conditions. If you Gain a Sponsor, or participate in Community Outreach, the specific sponsor or charity becomes your condition. If you can narrate how these organizations or activities would benefit your Player you may treat them in the same way as a negative Condition you have placed upon your opponent.

You can capitalize on Conditions in a few ways. If you use a Condition against your opponent during play, you can:

- Add 1 to any roll you make against them.
- Subtract 1 from any roll they make against you (if you're on Defense. Remember you can't directly challenge the Offense, but you can suggest that they might have a more difficult time than they thought).
- Add 1 extra Stress when you use a Move that causes Stress.



MORE RULES

Carrying The Team

Carrying Forward is a way to show how your immediate circumstances are setting you up for success later on. Any time you have an effect that causes you to Carry 1 Forward, that's one point that you can bank for later use. You can save up as many of these points as you like and then cash in as many points as you wish on any roll you wish. They add to your result after rolling and adding stats. Once you use Carry Forward, the points you used are gone and if you're out, you'll have to earn more back.

A Note On Moves

In Goalposts & Gridirons, you declare your moves BEFORE describing their triggering actions. When you declare a move at the beginning of your turn, you should read the flavor text on the move (or come up with your own flavor text if what's written is becoming stale after

repetition), and then look at the possible outcomes. Each of the results the die could produce corresponds to a snappy result. When you roll the dice these are the moments you should narrate.

For Example

On my turn, I declare a Scrimmage. I narrate:

"Two teams lined up on the Line of Scrimmage. Looking into each other's hardened and determined gaze, the players prepare to surge into one another with shocking force. Out of this clash a play is made, and yards are heroically won or tragically lost."

I then roll with Jock and get an 11. I want to double my yards gained, so I use my turn to describe the Surprise Play! that let me burst through the opponent's defense and score those extra yards.

If there isn't a prompt in your result (such as a 7-9 in Roughing a Player) narrate a quick sentence based on what is listed in the move and go

quickly to the next turn.

You may make as many different moves as you like as long as you have Possession, but you may not make the same move twice in a row unless otherwise stated.

Show Me Your Moves

The next few pages will highlight the available moves in G&G. The basic moves are available to everyone and they are:

- Assess The Field
- Brilliant Play
- Community Outreach
- Create A Scandal
- Explore The Fans
- Gain A Sponsor
- Rough A Player
- Scrimmage

Remember that when you make moves in G&G that you are choosing your moves before narrating them in the fiction. Think about which move will bring you closer to victory!

A photograph of a stadium with rows of orange and green seats. The text "THE MOVES" is overlaid in the center. The orange seats are in the background, and the green seats are in the foreground. The text is in a large, white, sans-serif font.

THE MOVES

ASSESS THE FIELD (STRATS)

"Well, I don't know that that play did them a lot of good in the short term, but just look at the field! They've really set themselves up for success here. A lot of good options in play, let's see what they do next..."

When you Assess the field, you are setting yourself up for the next few moves. Roll with Strats and choose Offense or Defense.

On a 10+ you gain a first down and gain the following effects:

- If you chose Offense, carry 1 forward & clear any conditions OR give one to your opponent.
- If you chose Defense, choose one move from your enemy. They cannot make this move for an amount of moves equal to how much your roll exceeds 10.

On a 7-9 you advance you carry one forward OR your opponent takes -1 to their next roll.

On a 6- you turn over possession & your opponent carries 1 forward. Mark 1 Crowd Favor since the crowd enjoys a good strategist.

BRILLIANT PLAY (STRATS)

"I've never seen anything like it! Just goes to show you that brute force can only get you so far. You've really got to know the sport, and by golly, she knows that sport! That play was a work of absolute genius! They'll be teaching it in schools all over within a year, I bet."

When you make a Brilliant Play, roll with Strats.

On a 10+ describe a quick play your team has made. Take a First Down and choose two:

- Manipulative Play: Give a condition to your opponent.
- Open Field: Carry 1 forward.
- Show of Force: Make an immediate Scrimmage move. (These cannot be chained together)
- Hard fought play: Gain a Crowd Favor

On a 7-9 you advance the field but do not gain a First Down. Choose 1 from the 10+ list.

On a 6- you turn over play to your opponent. Mark 1 Crowd Favor, though. It was a good shot. If you rolled snake eyes your QB gets sacked & you take 1 Stress.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH (EGO)

"Visiting sick kids, helping build houses, promoting grassroots campaigns, all ways to use the power of Celebrity to affect real and positive change in this world."

If a Named Athlete commits to an act of Community Outreach, roll with Ego.

On a 10+ take a First Down and choose one:

- Revitalizing Energy: Heal 1 Stress
- Inspirational Acts: Carry 1 forward
- Good Publicity: You can make an immediate Gain a Sponsor move. (You cannot chain Good Publicity together)
- Redeemed: Remove any condition, including Scandalized.

On a 7-9 you advance and take 1 Crowd Favor.

On a 6- it's clear that you're just doing it for the cameras. You win some people (and mark 1 Crowd Favor) but the majority of people aren't convinced of your altruism. Turn over possession.

CREATE A SCANDAL (PHOTOGENIC)

"They did WHAT? I'll never be able to look at them the same way again..."

When you Create a Scandal for the other team, describe the sordid affair, and then roll with Photogenic.

On a 10+ it's heinous crime. Take a First Down and choose one:

- Your opponent suffers the condition Scandalized, which also carries a -1 penalty to the stat of your choice. You can only apply this penalty a maximum of two times.
- You may choose one of your opponents Named Athletes and remove all of their Sponsors and Outreach and replace them with a Scandal. They lose all associated benefits of the Sponsors/Outreach.

On a 7-9 you advance and can apply any other condition to your opponent.

On a 6- you cause a scandal to yourself. Your opponent can place any condition on you. You mark 1 Crowd Favor through sheer pity.

EXPLORE THE FANS (EGO)

"Football's not just about the athletes, no sir. It's also about the fans, watching their team struggle to get to the Big Game. It's about tailgating, fantasy leagues, and the weekly coming together to enjoy this common interest. The fans are real people, with real lives."

When you choose to explore your fans, roll with Ego.

On a 10+ your fans do something spectacular. Take a First Down and choose two:

- Team Spirit: Win 1 Crowd Favor.
- Revitalizing Energy: Heal 1 Stress
- Inspirational Acts: Carry 1 forward

On a 7-9 you advance, and choose one from above.

On a 6- the story falls flat. Turn over possession. You still mark Crowd Favor, though. A person's a person, no matter how small.

GAIN A SPONSOR (PHOTOGENIC)

"You got chops, kid. Ever think how you could help increase your image off the field? I'm thinking photoshoots, commercials, a sporting goods line! The sky's the limit once you've got a sponsor."

Whenever you gain a sponsor, narrate a quick commercial for their product, then roll Photogenic.

On a 10+ the tie in is a hit! Take a First Down and choose one:

- Revitalizing Energy: Heal 1 Stress
- Inspirational Acts: Carry 1 forward
- Good Publicity: You can make an immediate Community Outreach move. (You cannot chain Good Publicity together)
- Redeemed: Remove any condition, including Scandalized.

On a 7-9 you advance and take 1 Crowd Favor.

On a 6- it's clear that you're just doing it for the cameras. You win some people (and mark 1 Crowd Favor) but the majority of people see through it. Turn over possession.

ASSESS THE FIELD (STRATS)

"Boy that was a cheap move, slamming their receiver like that. You could hear that impact from the parking lot. They'll be playing that over and over on the highlight reels for sure."

When you Rough a Player, target one of your opponent's Named Athletes and roll with Jock.

On a 10+ you cause 1 Stress and choose one of the following:

- He's Benched: That player cannot be used in future scenes until the player takes reasonable steps within the fiction to revitalize the athlete. Any Sponsors or Community Outreach that player is involved with are lost. Any ongoing Scandals, however, are also lost.
- Serious Impact: The controlling player loses any carry forward they may have.
- Open Field: Carry 1 forward.

On a 7-9 cause 1 Stress as your target kneels in support momentarily. Soon enough they're back in the game.

On a 6- your target springs back up heroically. You earn a Crowd Favor, though. It was still a good hit.

BRILLIANT PLAY (STRATS)

Two teams lined up on the Line of Scrimmage. Looking into each other's hardened and determined gaze, the players prepare to surge into one another with shocking force. Out of this clash a play is made, and yards are heroically won or tragically lost.

When you Scrimmage, roll with Jock.

On a 10+ describe a quick play your team has made. This play grants your team a First Down as well as two of the following:

- Surprise Play!: Double the yards gained.
- Open Field: Carry 1 forward.
- Genius Tactics: Make an immediate Brilliant Play move. (These effects cannot be chained together)
- Hard fought play: Gain a Crowd Favor

On a 7-9 you advance the field but do not gain a First Down. Choose one from the 10+ list:

On a 6- you turn over play to your opponent. Mark 1 Crowd Favor, though. It was a good shot. If you rolled snake eyes your QB gets sacked & you take 1 Stress.

The background of the image is a dense, textured wall of green bamboo leaves. The leaves are long, narrow, and pointed, creating a complex, layered pattern of light and dark green. The lighting is soft, highlighting the individual blades and their natural curves. The overall effect is a rich, organic texture that fills the entire frame.

THE TEAMS

THE BIG CITY BRUISERS

From a rich metropolis, this team of hard-hitters doesn't waste time beating around the bush. Instead, they just beat you.

+1 to Jock & Ego, -1 to Strats & Photogenic.

Choose 2 of the following moves:

- **Overenthusiastic Fans:** You can use Rough A Player on your opponent's Named Fan.
- **Big-Time Owner:** Your team is owned by a prominent millionaire, a wealthy politician, or a critically acclaimed film personality. You gain an extra character with which to Gain a Sponsor, participate in Community Outreach, or become the target of a Scandal.
- **Scent of Blood:** If you have caused Stress in this Possession, carry 1 forward on all rolls against your opponent.
- **Bribing the Refs:** Add the following option to the list of choices available on a 10+ for Scrimmage or Brilliant Play:
 - **Dirty Move:** Cause 1 Stress
- **A Million Fans:** You have two Named Fans.

THE PRETTY ONES

Attractive fan-favorites but they could spend a little less time at photoshoots & a little more in spring training.

+1 to Photogenic & Ego, -1 to Jock & Strats

Choose 2 of the following moves:

- **Cover Shoot:** You're really focused on the face of the team. You take a further -1 penalty to Jock but gain an additional +1 to Photogenic.
- **Acting Gig:** You were in the pictures, kid. Your part in [Insert Movie Here] was inspiring. You begin play with a movie studio as a bonus sponsor for all of your Named Athletes. This sponsor cannot be removed by any effect.
- **Thick Skin:** Your opponent takes a -1 penalty on any rolls to Create a Scandal against you.
- **Famous Fans:** You've got fans with fans. Your Named Fan is someone super famous. Any time you Explore the Fans or Gain a Sponsor you can choose to pick freely from either move's list.
- **Crowd Favorite:** They love you. Any time you earn Crowd Favor, roll 1d6. On a 6 you gain two points instead of one.

THE RIVALS

They're your rivals, my rivals, everyone's rivals, really. But the people love a bad guy.

+1 to Jock & Photogenic, -1 to Strats & Ego

Choose 2 of the following moves:

- **Playing Dirty:** Add the following option to the list of choices available on a 10+ for Scrimmage or Brilliant Play:
 - **Dirty Move:** Cause 1 Stress.
- **Everyone Loves The Bad Guys:** Whenever you cause Stress, roll 1d6. On a 6 you mark 1 Crowd Favor.
- **Checkered Past:** You may Create a Scandal on your own players. If you do so, you ignore the stat penalty.
- **Trash Talk:** Whenever you Create a Scandal or Rough a Player you may choose freely from the options on either list.
- **Roughing the Passer:** Your opponent turns over possession on a 7- instead of 6-.

THE SMALL TOWN STRATEGISTS

This one-horse town somehow has a franchise, but they stay competitive by the genius of their coaches & players.

+1 to Strats & Ego, -1 to Jock & Photogenic

Choose 2 of the following moves:

They Built It, We Came: You're playing on the home-turf. In addition to your Named Athletes & Fan, you have a Named Stadium. It can Gain Sponsors and participate in Community Outreach but cannot be the target of Stress or Scandals.

Barnraiser: That's one hell of a party. When your team celebrates, the whole town celebrates. Give a short description of one of these barnraisers and roll with Ego. On a 10+ you may choose two: Remove one Scandal, two Conditions, or heal 3 Stress. On a 7-9 choose 1. On a 6- the barn's in trouble, take a Crowd Favor as it makes the local news, and turn over Possession.

Tireless Study: You may make the Brilliant Play move twice in a row.

Small Business Sponsor: Team Spirit runs in the blood of local entrepreneurs. You may use Ego for Gain a Sponsor.

It's Like They Saw It Coming: Any time your opponent uses Scrimmage, Rough a Player, or Brilliant Play, you carry 1 forward.

OPTIONAL PLAYBOOK: THE VISITORS

Literally from Outer Space. This team of ferocious aliens wants to take over the Earth, but if we can beat them at Football they'll leave us alone.

+Jock & Strats, -Ego & Photogenic.

Choose 2 of the following moves:

- **Intimidating Violence:** Whenever you Rough a Player, give them the Condition, Terrified.
- **Out of This World:** Your bodies do not abide by human standards. Your Stress track goes up to 6, instead of 5.
- **I Didn't Know They Could Do THAT:** Aliens can do some weird shit. Any time you make a Brilliant Play you can give your opponent the Bewildered Condition.
- **Alien Conditioning:** Any time you take advantage of an opponent's Conditions you may double the bonus you receive.
- **Voiced By:** (This move replaces Gain a Sponsor.) I've heard that voice before... Declare a voice actor for one of your Named Athletes. If you can, do your best impersonation of that voice actor. Then roll with Photogenic.
 - On a 10+ it's a perfect choice! Take a First Down and choose one:
 - **Martial Arts Legend:** Cause 1 Stress
 - **Action Star:** Carry 1 forward
 - **We Need To Go Deeper:** You cast a football player in their first acting gig... as a football playing alien. You may make an immediate Scrimmage or Brilliant Play move because THEMATIC SYNERGY
 - **Dulcet Tones:** Remove any condition, including Scandalized.
 - On a 7-9 you cast a nobody, but it could be worse. Advance and take 1 Crowd Favor.
 - On a 6- it's not a good pick. You chose Gilbert Gottfried for the big, muscled dude, didn't you? Mark 1 Crowd Favor as the hipsters watching appreciate the irony, but dude, you hecked up. Turn over possession.

Blank Playbook

(Print out copies of this sheet out & give one to each player. Fill in the sheet with your Team's Playbook info.)

Team:

Moves:

Jock:

Strats:

Photogenic:

Ego:

Named Characters:

Athlete 1:

Athlete 2:

Sponsor:

Sponsor:

Outreach:

Outreach:

Scandal:

Scandal:

Athlete 3:

Athlete 4:

Sponsor:

Sponsor:

Outreach:

Outreach:

Scandal:

Scandal:

Fan:

Misc:

Life Event:

Sponsor/Life Event:

Outreach:

Outreach:

Scandal:

Scandal:

Advancement: Notes:

Rank 1: Gain a new move from your team. Rank 2: +1 to a stat of your choice.

Rank 3: Gain a new move from your team. Rank 4: +1 to a stat of your choice.

Rank 5+: Gain a new move from another team OR +1 to a stat of your choice.

CREDITS & THANKS

RiverhouseGames.com

Twitter [@LeviathanFiles](https://twitter.com/LeviathanFiles)

Facebook.com/RiverhouseGames

Patreon.com/RiverhouseGames

Riverhouse Thanks You:

Thank you for playing this Riverhouse game. You can find more podcasts at RiverhouseGames.com as well as games and resources about queer & LGBT+ tabletop gaming. Thank you to the people backing the Riverhouse Games Patreon:

Nyssa MacKinnon, Jalyn Euteneier, Rohit Sodhia & GamersPlane.com, Simcha Walker, VJ Brown, Paul Bennett, Amanda Coyle, Rob Abrazado, Tobie Abad, Vi Brower, Rob Day, Patrick 'The Tyrant of Boredom' West, and Emmeline Duplois, THANK YOU! If you want to see your name in upcoming Riverhouse games or podcasts, you can set a small monthly subscription at Patreon.com/RiverhouseGames

Photo Credits

All photographs used in this production were sourced from Unsplash.com. Photo credits go to:

Dave Shaft

Peter Feghali

Nathan Shively

Keith Johnson

Abigail Keenan

Sandro Schuh

David Straight

Ben White

RIVERHOUSE  GAMES